

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

SUB A' 1. A distributed switching platform couplable to an Internet

2 Protocol (IP) network, comprising:

3 a main control unit (MCU) couplable to said IP network and
4 configured to generate call and control processing commands;

5 a switching partition couplable to said IP network and
6 including:

7 an input-output distributor (IOD), and

8 a circuit-switched matrix and line interface coupled to
9 said IOD and configured to provide an interface to a plurality
10 of access nodes, said IOD configured to convey said call and
11 control processing commands to said circuit-switched matrix
12 and line interface to allow said circuit-switched matrix and
13 line interface to control access to said plurality of access
14 nodes.

2. The distributed switching platform as recited in Claim 1

2 wherein said MCU and said switching partition are adapted to
3 communicate employing a User Datagram Protocol (UDP).

3. The distributed switching platform as recited in Claim 1 wherein said MCU and said switching partition are geographically separable.

4. The distributed switching platform as recited in Claim 1 wherein ones of said plurality of access nodes are selected from the group consisting of:

- a digital instrument;
- an analog instrument;
- a digital trunk; and
- an analog trunk.

5. The distributed switching platform as recited in Claim 1 further comprising an application server couplable to and configured to communicate with said MCU.

6. The distributed switching platform as recited in Claim 1 wherein said MCU is a primary MCU, said distributed switching platform further comprising a secondary MCU couplable to said IP network.

7. The distributed switching platform as recited in Claim 6
wherein said primary and secondary MCUs are geographically
separable.

8. The distributed switching platform as recited in Claim 6
wherein only one of said primary and secondary MCUs is configured
to provide said call and control processing commands at any time,
said one of said primary and secondary MCUs being in control of
said distributed switching platform.

9. The distributed switching platform as recited in Claim 8
wherein said one of said primary and secondary MCUs which is in
control of said distributed switching platform is configured to
update a database associated with said other one of said primary
and secondary MCUs.

10. The distributed switching platform as recited in Claim 1
further comprising a second switching partition couplable to said
IP network and including:

a second IOD, and

a second circuit-switched matrix and line interface coupled to
said second IOD and configured to provide an interface to said
plurality of access nodes.

11. A method of operating a distributed switching platform
coupled to an Internet Protocol (IP) network, comprising:

generating call and control processing commands with a main
control unit (MCU) coupled to said IP network;

coupling an input-output distributor (IOD) to said IP network;

providing an interface to a plurality of access nodes via a
circuit-switched matrix and line interface coupled to said IOD,
said IOD conveying said call and control processing commands to
said circuit-switched matrix and line interface to allow said
circuit-switched matrix and line interface to control access to
said plurality of access nodes.

12. The method as recited in Claim 11 wherein said MCU and
said IOD communicate employing a User Datagram Protocol (UDP).

13. The method as recited in Claim 11 wherein said MCU and
said IOD are geographically separated.

14. The method as recited in Claim 11 wherein ones of said plurality of access nodes are selected from the group consisting of:

- a digital instrument;
- an analog instrument;
- a digital trunk; and
- an analog trunk.

15. The method as recited in Claim 11 further comprising coupling an application server to said MCU.

16. The method as recited in Claim 11 wherein said MCU is a primary MCU, said distributed switching platform further comprising a secondary MCU coupled to said IP network.

17. The method as recited in Claim 16 wherein said primary and secondary MCUs are geographically separated.

18. The method as recited in Claim 16 wherein only one of said primary and secondary MCUs provides said call and control processing commands at any time, said one of said primary and secondary MCUs being in control of said distributed switching platform.

19. The method as recited in Claim 18 further comprising updating a database associated with at least one of said one of said primary and secondary MCUs.

20. The method as recited in Claim 11 further comprising:
coupling a second IOD to said IP network; and
providing an interface to said plurality of access nodes via
a second circuit-switched matrix and line interface coupled to said
second IOD.

[illegible]

21. A distributed switching platform means coupled to an
Internet Protocol (IP) network, comprising:

a main control unit (MCU) means, coupled to said IP network,
that generates call and control processing commands;

a switching partition means coupled to said IP network and
including:

an input-output distributor (IOD) means, and

a circuit-switched matrix and line interface means,
coupled to said IOD, that provides an interface to a plurality
of access nodes, said IOD means conveying said call and
control processing commands to said circuit-switched matrix
and line interface means to allow said circuit-switched matrix
and line interface means to control access to said plurality
of access nodes.

22. The distributed switching platform means as recited in
Claim 21 wherein said MCU means and said switching partition means
are adapted to communicate employing a User Datagram Protocol
(UDP).

23. The distributed switching platform means as recited in
Claim 21 wherein said MCU means and said switching partition means
are geographically separable.

24. The distributed switching platform means as recited in
Claim 21 wherein ones of said plurality of access nodes are
selected from the group consisting of:

- a digital instrument;
- an analog instrument;
- a digital trunk; and
- an analog trunk.

25. The distributed switching platform means as recited in
Claim 21 further comprising an application server means coupled to
said MCU.

26. The distributed switching platform means as recited in
Claim 21 wherein said MCU means is a primary MCU means, said
distributed switching platform means further comprising a secondary
MCU means coupled to said IP network.

27. The distributed switching platform means as recited in
Claim 26 wherein said primary and secondary MCU means are
geographically separated.

28. The distributed switching platform means as recited in
2 Claim 26 wherein only one of said primary and secondary MCU means
3 provides said call and control processing commands at any time,
4 said one of said primary and secondary MCU means being in control
5 of said distributed switching platform means.

29. The distributed switching platform means as recited in
2 Claim 28 wherein said one of said primary and secondary MCU means
3 which is in control of said distributed switching platform means
4 updates a database means associated with said other one of said
5 primary and secondary MCU means.

30. The distributed switching platform as recited in Claim 21
2 further comprising a second switching partition means coupled to
3 said IP network and including:
4 a second IOD means, and
5 a second circuit-switched matrix and line interface means,
6 coupled to said second IOD means, that provides an interface to
7 said plurality of access nodes.

31. An enterprise call center coupled to an Internet Protocol
(IP) network, comprising:

a primary main control unit (MCU) coupled to a first location
associated with said IP network;

a secondary MCU coupled to a second location associated with
said IP network, at least one of said primary and secondary MCUs
generating call and control processing commands;

a first switching partition coupled to said IP network and
including:

an input-output distributor (IOD); and

a circuit-switched matrix and line interface, coupled to
said IOD, that provides an interface to a plurality of access
nodes, said IOD conveying said call and control processing
commands to said circuit-switched matrix and line interface to
allow said circuit-switched matrix and line interface to
control access to said plurality of access nodes.

32. The enterprise call center as recited in Claim 31 wherein
said primary and secondary MCUs and said first switching partition
communicate employing a User Datagram Protocol (UDP).

33. The enterprise call center as recited in Claim 31 wherein
2 said first switching partition is coupled to a third location
3 associated with said IP network.

34. The enterprise call center as recited in Claim 31 wherein
2 ones of said plurality of access nodes are selected from the group
3 consisting of:

- 4 a digital instrument;
- 5 an analog instrument;
- 6 a digital trunk; and
- 7 an analog trunk.

35. The enterprise call center as recited in Claim 31 further
2 comprising an application server coupled to at least one of said
3 primary and secondary MCUs.

36. The enterprise call center as recited in Claim 31 wherein
2 only one of said primary and secondary MCUs provides said call and
3 control processing commands at any time, said one of said primary
4 and secondary MCUs being in control of said enterprise call center.

37. The enterprise call center as recited in Claim 36 wherein
2 said one of said primary and secondary MCUs which is in control of
3 said enterprise call center updates a database associated with said
4 other one of said primary and secondary MCUs.

38. The enterprise call center as recited in Claim 31 wherein
2 said enterprise call center is coupled to a Public Switched
3 Telephone Network (PSTN) via one of said plurality of access nodes.

39. The enterprise call center as recited in Claim 31 further
2 comprising a second switching partition coupled to said IP network,
3 including:

4 a second IOD, and

5 a second circuit-switched matrix and line interface, coupled
6 to said second IOD, that provides an interface to a said plurality
7 of access nodes.

40. The enterprise call center as recited in Claim 31 wherein
2 at least one of said primary and secondary MCUs and said switching
3 partition are embodied in a sequence of instructions executable on
4 a general purpose computer system.